

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, December 20, 1891, with transcript

Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Dr. Alexander Graham Bell. Hotel de Genes, Genoa, (Italy) Dec. 20, 1891. My darling Alec:

It's terribly discouraging work writing to you when I don't believe you will ever get the letter. M. le Cav. Celtelletti has been with us all day and helped me to get rid of a lot of superfluous cash. I am sorry my dear, but I shall have to go to the banker's here and dig the first hole in my letter of credit, both of which I am happy to relate still abide with me. Some one told me today that this was the most expensive hotel in Europe and I have about come to the conclusion that it is. My bill is gigantic in its proportions and I can't see why. I am going to study it and see where the leaks are and stop them in future if possible. I thought my bill ought to be small because our rooms are small and look out on the court. I meant to change them, but concluded that I preferred to save my money as we were never indoors except at night. I wouldn't repent my bargain only it doesn't seem to have acted favorably on that bill.

Well as for M. Celtelletti, I have decided that I want to buy samples of old embroidery for a museum for the benefit of the sewing class, so I asked him if he could tell me where to go. Of course he insisted on going with me himself and that involved his secretary's going too, as he speaks very little English, so the Mutual Life must have been rather depleted of its officers. We knocked at an old iron-bound and brass-studded door in a blank wall just beyond the old Doria Palace and presently were admitted into a dark cellar-like hall 2 littered up with old lumber in the shape of antique furniture more or less smashed. Upstairs we went among more relics and entered into a fine and beautifully proportioned vaulted hall lined with old carved cabinets on whose tops and shelves rare and curious pieces of old china rested. We passed through this into another and smaller, but still grand

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room, the walls lined with old pictures above and cabinets below and with various pieces of old furniture disposed about the room so as to give it the appearance of being occupied as a family parlor, as indeed is the case, this being the home of the old antiquary himself who lived there among his collections. I thought they must after a time become part of his home and that he must hate to part with them. He didn't however try to persuade me not to buy anything and I got quite a number of things, among them two pages of beautifully illuminated manuscript which I think will please Papa. In the afternoon Cav Cattelletti went with us to a manufactory of pottery out of town, where I spent some more money. Don't scold please, I enjoyed it more than I have anything else. Tomorrow at 12 we lunch with our Italian friend and then drive to Nervi. He says the roads from Nervi to Spezzie are very bad, so probably I won't attempt the drive. I will stay a couple of days in Nervi, not more I think, for I am in a hurry to get the children studying, but I do not like to hurry too fast for they say Florence is very cold and disagreeable and I want the children to be quite over their colds. They are very well indeed otherwise and very happy.

With much love. As ever yours, Mabel.